

REPORT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

FOR THE SUMMER - 1945

The summer months - June, July and August - of 1945 saw no let-up in activity in the Industrial Relations Department. As a matter of fact, there were more demands upon the Department for services than in immediately preceding periods. The close of the European war and the fact that things were going well for the Allies in the Pacific theatre caused planning on the part of industrialists, which, in turn, made it extremely important that the Department keep in closest possible touch with all channels of policy making.

To date, five conferences have been held in the Industrialists' Program initiated by the Department last Spring. There was also a conference of the original group of Industry Executives involved in our program, with the new State Department of Education, Division Against Discrimination in Employment. In the latter conference the position of the State was clarified; in the previous five conferences the Industrialists discussed among themselves. The first two conferences were with the same persons; the other three conferences were attended by ten to fifteen Executives, different ones at each. In each instance, so far, a selling job has been pursued. At one time a definite promise was made by a President to upgrade five girls to positions as sales girls in a downtown department store. This President's decision was voiced at the second of the Industrialists' conferences and carried the understanding that the upgradings would be made within sixty days. At the moment, approximately four months later, the store in question has officially stated to your Secretary that no Negroes are employed by the store as sales clerks. On the other hand, it has been reliably reported to your Secretary that two Negro girls are at least acting as sales clerks in the shoe department of this store. Your Secretary has not seen them himself, and so cannot say that this progressive step has been taken - even unofficially. Progress is being made, however.

Of most importance now is the impact of the surrender of Japan and cutbacks in industrial employment, on Negroes in our community. Your Secretary's best estimate is that there have been about eight thousand Negroes thrown out of work in the Greater Newark area. Already we are getting the beginning of the frustrations from unemployment that we shall have to address our efforts toward combating: A woman in the office of the Department recently was emotionally distraught and erratically moved to action - any kind of action - that might help solve her problem. She had been laid off a job on which her take-home pay was about \$40 a week. She is the sole support of her two children, ages two and four. Through her agitation pushed her fear of how she would be able to keep her home together on a \$22 a week job that was being offered. The Child Care Center in which her children were left during the war is to be closed by October 1, 1945. To pay some individual to care for the children would take too much of her new wages. Living costs have gone up considerably for persons like her and \$22 will be inadequate to maintain a family of three. The spectre of being laid off the new job offered loomed as another factor contributing to her frustration.

That case represents the facts and the fears that we shall have to keep from erasing all the value of the Victory of Allies. This represents the next battle, on the home front.

During the week following the surrender of Japan the Department sent a letter to one hundred and thirty-seven companies in Essex County and parts of Hudson and Union Counties.

Excluding routine work, activity included continued conferences with Mr. Jones concerning our Industrialists' Program and follow up with certain individuals; consultations in this office with the Executive Secretary of the Morristown Service Council on getting U.S.E.S. cooperation in Morristown; two conferences with the Executive Secretary of the Newark Chamber of Commerce to interpret to him our interests with industries and business and the desire for help from the Chamber; attendance at two luncheons and one Dinner - all of Social Work groups - which helps to facilitate inter-agency cooperation; consultation given in this office to the Executive Secretary of the Bloomfield Council on Race Relations on how to develop worth while and respected personnel contacts; attendance at five meetings of two committees of the New Jersey Welfare Council, on which your Secretary serves; one additional conference at Public Service Coordinated Transport, with Mr. Fields - ending in the corporation attorney being requested to study my argument and report to us (to date this has not been done); special recruiting for Erie Railroad Company and advice on using Negro men as Yard Brake men for the first time; presence at the signing of an agreement between the federal F.E.P.C. and the U.E. and E.M.W. Union; a special study of conditions at Special Toiletries, Inc., and a Personnel Report to its President (suggested to the company by the Irvington Chamber of Commerce); one public address, to the Trenton Optimist Club; cooperation with Jewish Community Relations Committee in determining anti-Semitic and anti-Negro passages in some printed material, and the committee's action toward banning sales; extraction of promise from Purelator Products Company to hire their first Negro girls; the placement of the first Negro clerical worker at Federal Telephone and Radio Corporation (she is still there, after the lay-offs following the Japanese surrender); a special study of conditions at Blackburn Products Company, and a Personnel Report; interceding for about twelve workers with Special Products Company to get the company to pay them wages due; successfully completed three investigations of four instances of new discrimination at U.S.E.S., Newark office; help to keep a twenty-three year old boy (helped previously by this office) get psychiatric treatment instead of a jail sentence for a moral violation - indecent exposure - (case still pending); called a conference, after the Japanese surrender, of persons professionally employed by private agencies, and having to do with Employment problems of Negroes - the conference set up machinery for closer cooperation and exchange of applications and referrals and assignments to get certain specific information on local conditions; attendance at the Board of Education Hearing on Child Care Centers, at which time your Secretary pressed for their uninterrupted continuation with local funds; help in three cases referred by the Traveler's Aid, requiring from one to three interviews each.